

CHAPTER NO. 664

HOUSE BILL NO. 2683

By Representatives Curtiss, Walker and Mr. Speaker Naifeh and Representatives McKee, Roach, Buttry, Montgomery, Sargent, Bone, Patton, Bittle, Gresham, Litz, Henri Brooks, Yokley, Brenda Turner, Coleman, DuBois, Hargrove, Cooper, Overbey

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 2612

By Senator Crowe

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 58, Chapter 3, relative to county and municipal veterans' service offices.

WHEREAS, the general assembly finds that certain counties and municipalities have not established veterans' service offices; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the general assembly to encourage those counties and municipalities to establish veterans' service offices, either jointly or severally, as soon as is feasible; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-109(a), is amended by deleting the language "veterans of all wars in which the United States participated," and by substituting instead the language "veterans of the United States armed forces,".

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-109(a), is further amended by adding the following language at the end of the subsection:

The service offices shall be staffed by accredited veterans' service officers.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-109, is amended by deleting subsection (b) in its entirety and by redesignating the subsequent subsections as appropriate.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-110, is amended by designating the existing language as subsection "(a)" and by adding the following language as a new subsection to be designated as follows:

(b)

(1) The senior accredited officer serving in a county veterans' service office may receive compensation commensurate to the compensation paid to heads of county government departments of comparable size in the county in which the officer is employed. Such compensation may be prorated to reflect the number of hours that the officer actually works during a specific pay period.

(2) Staff personnel employed by the respective veterans' service offices may receive compensation commensurate to the compensation paid to county government employees in comparable positions.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-111, is amended by deleting the current language in its entirety and by substituting instead the following:

(a) A veterans' service officer shall be chosen by the governing body or bodies of the political subdivision or subdivisions creating the veterans' service office by which the officer is to be employed.

(b) If a veterans' service office is created by contract between two (2) or more political subdivisions, the veterans' service officer shall be approved by the governing body of each subdivision participating in the establishment of the office. If the political subdivisions are unable to agree upon a veterans' service officer, then the officer shall be chosen by the commissioner of veterans' affairs from among the candidates proposed by the political subdivisions.

(c) All veterans' service officers shall be honorably discharged veterans of the United States armed forces. Veterans' service officers shall have the authority to administer oaths and to take acknowledgments related to any matter falling within the scope of authority of their office, including the presentation of claims and other functions incident to obtaining benefits for discharged veterans. No veteran or dependent of a veteran shall be charged any fee for services rendered by a veterans' service officer.

(d) All veterans' service officers shall successfully complete training and be issued accreditation by the department of veterans' affairs within one (1) year from the date of appointment. Any veterans' service officer who does not complete the required training and receive accreditation within one (1) year of appointment shall be removed from office by the governing body or bodies of the political subdivisions creating the veterans' service office by which the officer is employed.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004, the public welfare requiring it.

PASSED: May 3, 2004


JIMMY RAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES


JOHN S. WILDER
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 14th day of May 2004


PHIL BREDESEN, GOVERNOR